IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please replace the abstract with the following replacement abstract:

~~Embodiments of the present invention provide methods~~ Methods, systems and articles of manufacture for automatically starting a node in a clustered computer system. A starting state value may be assigned to the node and a discovery process initiated to find a sponsor node. If a sponsor node is found, the node is joined with the sponsor node in the clustered computer system. If a sponsor node is not found, the node is started as a one-node cluster in the clustered computer system. An active state value is assigned to the node upon inclusion into the clustered computer system.

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